

**THE TESTIMONY OF CONGRESSWOMAN DARLENE HOOLEY BEFORE THE  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARKS, RECREATION, AND PUBLIC LANDS OF THE  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON RESOURCES CONCERNING H.R. 3434, THE McLOUGHLIN HOUSE  
NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE ACT**

I would first like to convey my sincere appreciation to Chairman Radanovich for so generously agreeing to work with me on H.R. 3434, The McLoughlin House National Historic Site Act and allowing it be heard before the subcommittee today.

I come before this committee today to reiterate my support for a bill that not only preserves an important piece of Pacific Northwest history, but arguably has considerable national historical importance as well. Before I delve into the specifics of the legislation, I'd like to take a few moments and reflect upon the life of the man for which this legislation bears his name, Dr. John McLoughlin.

Standing six feet four inches, John McLoughlin cast a giant of a shadow on the early development of the Oregon frontier. For twenty-one years his powerful voice was the only influence of law and order over an empire two and a half times the size of Texas. He had absolute control, and he maintained it peacefully and profitably with a balanced sense of justice. With an over-whelming sense of compassion and generosity beyond reproach, it's of little wonder that he was regarded by Native Americans as, "The Great White Eagle." John McLoughlin, did indeed, walk taller and cast the greatest shadow that ever fell so humbly on the changing face of Oregon.

McLoughlin was born in 1784 outside of Quebec, Canada. When McLoughlin was only 14 years old, he began an apprenticeship with a doctor and in 1803, at the youthful age of 19, was granted his license to practice surgery and pharmacy. Shortly thereafter Dr. McLoughlin obtained an appointment as medical officer for the North West Company, fierce competitor of the Hudson's Bay Company in the fur trade. McLoughlin continued his employment and partnership with the North West Company until 1821, at which point it was absorbed by the Hudson's Bay Company in a merger.

In 1824, McLoughlin arrived at Fort George, now called Astoria, Oregon near the mouth of the Columbia River, to further establish an administrative headquarters and supply depot for the ever expanding Hudson's Bay Company. In part, his duties were to create a mercantile arm of the British government, to monopolize the fur trade business, and maintain peace among the numerous tribes of Indians. Finding the facility at Astoria to be grossly rundown, unfertile and too far from inland trade facilities, in 1825 McLoughlin moved the northwest headquarters to a more favorable location on the northern side of the Columbia. He built the new site at Belle Vue Point in what is now Washington State and named it, Fort Vancouver.

The new fort was nearly 750 feet long and 450 feet wide with a stockade about 20 feet high. There were about 40 buildings inside the fort. The fort housed a school, a library, pharmacy, power house, chapel, officers, warehouses, workshops, a blacksmith shop, and the largest manufacturing facility west of the Rocky Mountains. Fully contained, behind the fort were fields of grains, an orchard and a vegetable garden. The Indians, with whom Dr. McLoughlin maintained a very good relationship, were not allowed inside the stockade and would conduct their trading through a porthole in the door. In 1829, a ship arrived from Boston bringing with it a horrible fever which broke out among them. Dr. McLoughlin spent much of his own time tending to the ills of the stricken, but within four years over 30,000 Indians lay dead.

The fort flourished under the leadership of Dr. McLoughlin. Without any type of military force, he was able

to maintain law and order by his own personality and by the cooperation of his officers and employees. There were no Indian wars in the Oregon Country until after his resignation. Dr. John McLoughlin was so revered for his work in the Oregon Country that in 1841 McLoughlin was knighted by Queen Victoria at Buckingham Palace.

By the 1840's, the British knew that they couldn't keep the American settlers out of Oregon, but they wanted to control as much of the land as possible. Discouragement came in the form of tall tales of fierce Indians, poor farming conditions, and terrible weather. Even though it was against the policy of the Hudson's Bay Company, Dr. McLoughlin was sympathetic to the plight of the settlers and offered them aid. Often arriving sick, hungry, and without provisions, his kindly heart extended them credit, fed and clothed them, cared for the sick, and supplied them with seed for farming. His personal decision to provide supplies and support to the American settlers coming over the Oregon Trail, contrary to his orders from the Hudson's Bay Company Governor, proved to be critical to the peaceful settlement of the territory in favor of U.S. claims.

In 1845, no longer able to stomach company policy toward American settlers, Dr. McLoughlin resigned his position with the Hudson's Bay Company. After his resignation, he purchased Hudson's Bay Company's land claim at Willamette Falls in Oregon City, and he and his family moved into his newly-built house (The McLoughlin House) in 1846. McLoughlin remained a public figure during his retirement and became a U.S. citizen in 1849. He donated land for a jail and female seminary, and in 1851 he was elected mayor of Oregon City. He died in his home only six short years later.

In 1941, the McLoughlin House was designated a National Historic Site, the first one in the west, and in 1957, Dr. John McLoughlin was named "Father of Oregon" by the Oregon State Legislature.

As you can see, Fort Vancouver and the McLoughlin House National Historic Site have a long and storied history together. The intent of my legislation is to see that history continued by expanding the boundaries of Fort Vancouver to include the McLoughlin House National Historic Site.

Currently the McLoughlin House National Historic Site is maintained and managed by the non-profit McLoughlin Memorial Association. When the McLoughlin House faced demolition in 1909, the Memorial Association was formed and money was raised to move the house to a public park atop the bluff. McLoughlin's home opened as a museum in 1910. For almost 100 years, the association has done admirable work to preserve and maintain this historic treasure so thousands of people can continue to tour the site annually. However, over the past several years, the association has been unable to raise the funds required to provide the needed maintenance and upkeep of the property that is now in jeopardy of falling into disrepair.

The McLoughlin House National Historic Act would do what we believe should have occurred over 60 years ago and that is include these properties as part of the National Park System to be managed by the National Park Service. Again, it is my intent that this would be done, not by creating a new unit of the National Park System, but rather by simply including the McLoughlin House into the boundaries of Fort Vancouver National Historic Site which is already administered as part of the National Park System. I believe that including the McLoughlin House into the boundaries of Fort Vancouver is the only way to preserve in perpetuity the cultural, educational, and historical benefits of this historic site for future generations.

This legislation has the support of city and county officials, the McLoughlin Memorial Association, and the entire Oregon delegation. The citizens of Oregon City also approved a ballot measure by over 80 percent

that would grant the National Park Service an interest in the city property on which the McLoughlin House now sits to allow the NPS to administer the house.

I thank you once again for your consideration of this bill and thank the committee members for your time.

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